

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) has secured federal funding in the fiscal year 2008 "Agriculture Appropriations Act" (H.R. 3161) for important citrus and aquaculture research. The agriculture funding bill being debated by the House of Representatives today includes a total of \$2.3 million sought by the 13th District Congressman to continue research to help ensure the viability of citrus in the state of Florida and develop a system to farm new species of marine fish.

Buchanan requested and successfully secured \$1.74 million for the continuation of vital citrus canker and greening research by the University of Florida through the Cooperative State Research Extension and Education Service to improve technologies for treatment and detection, methods of movement and containment, and means to control and eliminate these devastating citrus diseases.

"Citrus canker and greening are serious plant diseases that threaten Florida's citrus industry," said Buchanan. "Federal funding to research these enormous challenges is critical to ensuring the citrus industry remains a vital part of the state and region's economy."

Michael W. Sparks, executive vice president/CEO of Florida Citrus Mutual, the citrus industry's largest grower trade organization said, "These funds will help support vital research efforts. Research has been and will continue to be the single most important investment that can be made to ensure the future viability of Florida's signature crop. Especially when Florida citrus is being threatened by a disease like citrus greening. Recently, greening was confirmed in the 24th Florida county. It's spreading and we need to find a solution through research."

The bill also includes \$594,000 the freshman lawmaker requested for Mote Marine Laboratory and the University of Texas' efforts to develop a simple, reliable, low-cost system to farm new species of marine fish in economical, environmentally sound systems.

"Seafood imports represent the number two trade deficit in the country," said Buchanan. "Many wild fisheries are being fished beyond their ability to recover and others have been closed. This funding will help address the U.S. trade deficit and meet consumer needs."

Dr. Kevan Main, director of the Mote Center for Aquaculture Research and Development said, "As fishery resources around the world continue to decline, there is a critical need to develop sustainable fish farming technologies. This project will develop innovative marine fish and filtration methods that will revolutionize U.S. fish farming."

The bill will eventually be reconciled with an agriculture funding bill that has yet to pass the Senate.